



POLICE OFFICER

◀ MAINTAINING ORDER ▶

Most of us are told from an early age that a police officer is our friend, but that is difficult to remember later when we see those flashing lights signaling for us to pull over and accept our punishment for a traffic violation. Fortunately, that doesn't happen very often. We quickly forget the inconvenience of traffic school and the pain of shelling out a few bucks for a fine or an increase in an insurance premium when our safety is threatened or our home invaded or our property damaged or stolen. In those instances, and many others, a police officer, who stands between us and those who would harm us or steal our property, re-emerges as our friend. That is a twenty-four hour job because a police officer, in most jurisdictions, is expected to protect us whether s/he is on duty or off. How many of us have said "I'm calling the cops" at least once in our lives, knowing full well that one would respond and start to set things straight, no matter the problem?

The description of police and sheriff's patrol officers, as set forth by the Standard Occupational Classification Manual, are those who "maintain order, enforce laws and ordinances, and protect life and property in an assigned patrol district. Perform combination of following duties: patrol a specific area on foot or in a vehicle; direct traffic; issue traffic summonses; investigate accidents; apprehend and arrest suspects, or serve legal processes of courts." Police officers also respond to emergencies, promote good community relations, and testify in court.

Civil service regulations govern the appointment of police and detectives in most states, large municipalities, and special police agencies, as well as in many smaller jurisdictions. Candidates must be U.S. citizens, usually at least 21 years old, at least a high school

graduate and must meet rigorous physical and personal qualifications. Eligibility usually depends on successful performance in competitive written examinations. One cannot have been convicted of a crime for which the applicant could have been punished by imprisonment in a state penitentiary

employed about 7 percent. A small proportion worked for educational services, rail transportation, and contract investigation and security services. Other job titles in this occupation are: public safety officer, alcohol law enforcement agent, K9 officer, patrol officer, and state trooper.

The Utah Peace Officer Standards and Training Academy (POST) is the basic training entity for all of Utah's law enforcement agencies.

nor can s/he have been convicted of an offense involving dishonesty, unlawful sexual conduct, physical violence, domestic violence, or the unlawful use, sale, or possession of a controlled substance.

Three to four months in a police academy is a requirement; the Utah Peace Officer Standards and Training Academy (POST) is the basic training entity for all of Utah's law enforcement agencies; on-the-job training provides the rest of the officer's education. Military experience, which provides relevant mental and physical conditioning, and college courses in police science are good starting places in some jurisdictions; others require an associate degree. Four-year degrees will aid in advancement.

In the U.S. police and detectives held about 861,000 jobs in 2006—79 percent were employed by local governments. State police agencies employed about 11 percent, and various federal agencies

In Utah, this occupation gets a four-star rating, which means that it will experience slower than average employment growth, but there will be a moderate volume of annual job openings. The need for replacements, rather than from business expansion, is projected to make up the majority of job openings in the coming decade.

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The next time you see those flashing lights, whether they are for you or not, remember these men and women who keep the peace and maintain order twenty-four hours a day. ☹



Occupational Wages-Published June 2009 for Police and Sheriffs Patrol Officers

(data from May 2008)

Area Name	Hourly Inexperienced	Hourly Median	Annual Inexperienced	Annual Median	Training
Central	\$16.98	\$18.47	\$35,320	\$38,410	Long term OJT (> 12 months)
Eastern	\$16.54	\$18.85	\$34,400	\$39,210	Long term OJT (> 12 months)
Ogden-Clearfield MSA	\$17.41	\$20.43	\$36,210	\$42,480	Long term OJT (> 12 months)
Provo-Orem MSA	\$15.42	\$19.02	\$32,070	\$39,570	Long term OJT (> 12 months)
Salt Lake City MSA	\$18.03	\$23.07	\$37,500	\$47,990	Long term OJT (> 12 months)
Southwest	\$13.90	\$17.27	\$28,910	\$35,930	Long term OJT (> 12 months)
St.George MSA	\$15.89	\$19.49	\$33,040	\$40,540	Long term OJT (> 12 months)
United States	--	\$24.70	--	\$51,410	Long term OJT (> 12 months)
Utah	\$16.68	\$20.69	\$34,690	\$43,040	Long term OJT (> 12 months)

*Indicates that hourly wage rates for occupations where workers typically work fewer than 2,080 hours per year are not available.

**This wage is equal to or greater than \$70.00 per hour or \$145,600 per year.

For more information:

- <http://publicsafety.utah.gov/post/index.html>
- <http://www.eaglecollege.edu/>
- <http://www.suu.edu/>
- <http://www.uvu.edu/>
- <https://www.weber.edu/>



Source: Utah Department of Workforce Services.